

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ALGIERS 001278

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/26/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PBTS](#) [PHUM](#) [AG](#) [MO](#) [WI](#)

SUBJECT: ALGERIA TAKING MORE CONCILIATORY TONE TOWARD MOROCCO

REF: ALGIERS 1251

Classified By: Ambassador Richard W. Erdman,
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY AND COMMENT

1. (C) Algerian FM Bedjaoui, in the GOA's first public remarks concerning Moroccan-Algerian relations since Morocco's cancellation of the prime ministers' meeting in Rabat, has struck a conciliatory tone. Alongside visiting Dutch FM Bot June 22, Bedjaoui called for "cooling things down" and noted that Algeria "under all circumstances (is) prepared to strengthen ties with Morocco." At the Diplomatic Institute of International Relations June 25, noting that Algeria had accepted the Moroccan invitation for the bilateral visit of heads of government, Bedjaoui said Algeria looked to "turn the page" and sought "excellent relations" with Morocco. Against the backdrop of Bedjaoui's remarks, the Algerian press highlighted like-minded positions from abroad rather than tensions with Morocco, Spanish FM Moratinos' confirmation that Spain did not recognize Moroccan sovereignty over the Western Sahara, and Kenya's diplomatic recognition of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. The press also noted that Algeria favored a referendum on self-determination in the Western Sahara and that Algerian diplomacy would be directed toward building a "strong, stable, peaceful, and democratic Maghreb union." Breaking the GOA's official silence following Morocco's cancellation of the Rabat meeting, Bedjaoui's remarks seem intended to defuse tension and portray Algeria as having taken the high road concerning relations with Morocco and support for greater regional cooperation via the Arab Maghreb Union. (End summary and comment.)

ALGERIAN FM CALLS FOR "COOLING
THINGS DOWN" AND "TURNING THE PAGE"

2. (U) Algerian Foreign Minister Bedjaoui, at a June 22 press conference with visiting Dutch FM Bot, spoke for the first time to the press about the state of relations between Morocco and Algeria since Rabat's cancellation of the visit by Algerian PM Ouyahia. Bedjaoui noted that Algeria had been "prepared to dispatch its prime minister to Morocco but (certain) circumstances relating to our fraternal neighbors had led them not to accept the visit, bearing in mind that it had been decided at their request." Apparently seeking to defuse tensions in the bilateral relationship with Morocco, he called for "cooling things down," suggested Algeria was disinclined to pursue a war of words with Morocco, and added that there was "an agreement with Morocco to leave the Western Sahara conflict in its natural framework, i.e., the United Nations." FM Bedjaoui concluded his remarks by noting that "(Algiers) is under all circumstances prepared to strengthen its ties with Rabat."

ALGERIA SEEKS EXCELLENT RELATIONS WITH RABAT

3. (U) Speaking June 25 at the Diplomatic Institute of International Relations, Bedjaoui said that Algeria "hopes to build with (Morocco)...fruitful relations" and that the Moroccan and Algerian peoples "deserve better than the current situation. Algeria is disposed toward ... dialogue ... (and) excellent relations with Morocco," concluded the Foreign Minister. On the cancellation of the meeting in Rabat and next steps ahead, Bedjaoui was quoted as saying: "We had the intention to meet bilaterally (with the Moroccans). In their wisdom, the two heads of state left the issue of the Western Sahara to the United Nations. A visit by (the Algerian) head of government was planned for Morocco. We accepted the invitation. Unfortunately, something occurred which our Moroccan brothers did not like. We did nothing to cast a shadow over the situation and hope that we will soon turn the page." Bedjaoui also reiterated "Algeria's attachment to Maghreb construction," which is a necessity dictated by circumstances no country in the region can ignore.

THE OFFICIAL PRESS: ALGERIA ALIGNED WITH U.N. APPROACH
ON THE WESTERN SAHARA; SEEKS STRONG MAGHREB UNION

14. (U) Bedjaoui's remarks coincided with a change of tone in the Algerian press, as it shifted focus from casting aspersions at Morocco and its leadership to highlighting supporting statements from abroad. For example, June 24 editions of the official newspaper, El Moudjahid, reported the remarks of Spanish Foreign Minister Moratinos before the Spanish Senate, where he clearly affirmed that Spain did not recognize Moroccan sovereignty over the Western Sahara. The "Spanish diplomats at the United Nations (in 1975) ceded the administration, not the sovereignty, of these territories." Moratinos also reportedly confirmed Spain's "active engagement" on the issue of the Western Sahara and on "guaranteeing the right of self-determination of the Sahrawi people" within the U.N. framework. Separately, the Algerian press reported that Kenya officially recognized the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic.

EL MOUDJAHID "CLARIFICATION"

15. (U) Emphasizing the reasonableness of the Algerian approach in an article entitled "Clarification," the official government daily El Moudjahid also summed up Algeria's position on the Western Sahara, including its support for a referendum on self-determination and resolution of the dispute in a U.N. framework. "All the resources of Algeria's diplomacy would be mobilized in search of peace, security, and development in the region and in the world," stressed the paper. Referring to Bedjaoui's statements, El Moudjahid said they were based on "a strong conviction, widely shared in the Maghreb, that nothing durable and solid can be built without going beyond our differences and without reinforcing the foundations on which we can build a strong, stable, peaceful, and democratic Maghreb union."

ERDMAN